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Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture



FALL 1994

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Cooperative State Research Service - Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

AT ISSUE ... FOOD STAMPS TO "EBT"

Farmers selling directly to the public can be authorized--like other retailers--to accept Food Stamp Program (FSP) coupons. You need to apply to the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) which is part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and responsible for the FSP. FNS field offices review retailer applications, give licenses, and explain program rules. Except for Delaware, Idaho, Alaska, and Nevada, there's at least one field office in each State. The easiest way to find them is to ask your local grocery store since most accept food stamp coupons and were authorized by an FNS field office.

Applying costs nothing. Retailer handling is simple--they only redeem coupons for food (no problem for farmers) and deposit the coupons at your local bank with special deposit slips supplied by FNS. Coupons come in denominations of \$1, \$5, and \$10. Like all government benefits, coupons will disappear as we change to electronic benefits. *Its already happening!*

Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) systems are delivering food stamp and other benefits in seven locations. Maryland delivers ALL food stamp and welfare benefits by EBT now. Recipients get plastic cards that look like credit or bank debit cards. and pay for food by a swipe of the card through a Point of Sale (POS) terminal at the cash register. Recipients can get their welfare benefits as cash through an Automatic Teller Machine. EBT gives better accounting, faster payment to retailers, more security for recipients, and extensive audit trails. More than half the States are planning EBT food stamps.

Sounds great ... but ... (there's always a "but") for farmers and some retailers that accept coupons there is a problem with EBT. There must be electric and phone lines available for POS terminals. So what happens when your State goes to EBT if you don't have required lines? The usual alternative is a paper voucher completed at time of purchase and called in later for approval. However, this process slows down the purchase and carries a risk of providing insufficient benefits. Maryland is experimenting with cellular phone POS terminals driven by battery -- no lines necessary. USDA is seeking other ideas for handling the problem because EBT is coming and paper is going. If you have any ideas or comments on improving these

procedures, please **let OSSA know by February 15, 1995.**

Please remember to put the following line in our address : "ATTN: EBT", and send to the address listed below under "Need Your Help!".

For information on the Maryland experiment phone Pat McMillan with the Maryland Department of Agriculture, 410-841-5770. For more detailed information on EBT phone Jeff Cohen with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, FNS, 703-305-2517.

NEED YOUR HELP!

This is your periodic reminder to help us with the mailing list. Please let us know if you are receiving multiple newsletters or if you or a friend are no longer farming and prefer not to receive the newsletter. Also contact us if you are aware of someone who is not receiving the newsletter, but should be. Your assistance with this challenging and very important task is much appreciated. OSSA continues to welcome your topics of interest, technologies and calendar of events. Contact: Bud Kerr, USDA-OSSA, AG BOX 2244, Washington, D.C. 20250-2244; telephone 202-401-1805, Fax 202-401-1804.

TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

New Fast Food - "If the test market is any indication of things to come, more and more Americans may be stopping at a nearby 7-Eleven for fresh fruit and vegetables. Americans are increasing overall produce consumption from an average of 3.5 servings per day to five servings per day. 7-Eleven will roll the program out region by region, with all 5,700 stores in the United States and Canada offering fresh produce by the end of 1998." (*The Produce News*, March 19, 1994, p. 4)

Livestock Census - "Taking Stock: The North American Livestock Census" is a new book available for \$16.95 from the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC). It presents an inventory of North American breeds and describes the status of livestock genetic diversity. Contact: Carolyn Christman, ALBC, P. O. Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312; telephone 919-542-5704.

IPM - A special chapter in the University of California manual, "Integrated Pest Management for Strawberries" addresses home garden strawberry production. Filled with photographs, line drawings, tables, and figures, the information is as up to date as possible. Enclose a \$30 check payable to UC Regents and order the book by number (3351) and title from ANR Publications, Dept. NR., UC, Oakland, CA 94608-1239; telephone 510-642-2431.

Free Brochure - Need information about shade structures for light-sensitive crops like vegetables, herbs, and ginseng? Contact: Rebecca Zunker, Progenix Corp., 1013 N. Third Avenue, Wausau, WI 54401; telephone 1-800-233-3356.

Squirming? - For only \$4.50 a year, readers receive *Worm Digest*, a new quarterly that uses the statement "worms deepening our connection to food and soil" on the masthead. Contact: Stephen White, *Worm Digest*, Box 544, Eugene, OR 97440; telephone 503-896-3467.

Noteworthy Trees - For information on living history you can "leaf through the past" by Contacting: Famous and Historic Trees, 8555 Plummers Road, Jacksonville, FL 32219; telephone 1-800-320-TREES.

Tip - Cottonseed meal is considered a slow-release fertilizer so applying it to tender seedlings will not be as risky as using chemical fertilizer like urea or ammonium nitrate.

Information - The 1993 Fruit Statistical Yearbook provides 20 years' worth of data on seven different fruits: peaches, apples, plums, apricots, grapes, nectarines, and strawberries. Prepaid single copy price is \$22.50 within the United States; international price is \$25. Contact: Charles Walker, National Peach Council, P. O. Box 11280, Columbia, SC 29211; telephone 803-788-7101.

Pest Control - Grape growers can use lure-baited traps in early spring to determine if skeletonizer pests pose a threat to vineyards. Contact: Edwin L. Soderstrom, USDA-ARS, Horticultural Crops Research Laboratory, 2021 Smith Peach Avenue, Fresno, CA 93727; telephone 209-453-3029.

New Pear Variety - ARS scientists have released a new pear--Potomac--to plant breeders. The new variety should be on the market in about 2 years. This pear resists--fire blight--the oldest, most serious disease of pomaceous fruit trees.

Imports - "U.S. imports of fresh cut flowers in 1993 were valued by the U.S. Customs Service at \$370.9 million. Of that total, imports from Colombia accounted for \$251.7 million, almost all of which landed at Miami International Airport." (*The Journal of Commerce*, May 5, 1994, p. 1A)

Available - "Increasing Organic Agriculture at the Local Level" costs \$18 and is a manual for consumers, growers, farmers, and policymakers. Contact: Michael Colin, Gildea Resource Center, 930 Miramonte Drive, Santa Barbara, CA 93109; telephone 805-963-0583, Fax 805-962-9080.

Video - Send a \$75 check to G. H. Short Course for the five-tape video of the 4th Annual Greenhouse Tomato Short Course, held in March 1994. Contact: R. G. Snyder, Mississippi State University, P. O. Box 231, Crystal Springs, MS 39059; telephone 601-892-3731, Fax 601-892-2056.

Options - Did you know that hubbard squash is prized for its seeds which are large, white, and, processors say, sweet? After cleaning, sorting, drying, salting, and packaging, some become snack food.

Going Up - "The Herbal Green Pages" is part of the membership package (\$45/year; \$60 after 12/31/94) in The Herb Growing and Marketing Network or can be purchased for \$20 (\$25 after 12/31/94). Contact: Maureen Rogers, The Herbal Connection, P.O. Box 245, Silver Spring, PA 17575; telephone 717-393-3295.

One More - "Specialty Mushrooms" is the latest factsheet in the series, "A Small-Scale Agriculture Alternative" from USDA's Office for Small-Scale Agriculture. Free, the publication contains interesting facts and information sources. Contact: Bud Kerr, USDA-OSSA, AG BOX 2244, Washington, D.C. 20250-2244; telephone 202-401-1805, Fax 202-401-1804.

Just Released - "Chicken Tractor: The Gardener's Guide to Happy Hens and Healthy Soil" is for families who want to raise their own chickens--for food, for fun, and for profit. Order copies of the 240-page softback book at \$19.95 per copy. Contact: Patricia Foreman, Good Earth Publication, P.O. Box 898, Shelburne, VT 05482; telephone and Fax 802-425-3201.

And Another - "The Chicken Health Handbook" is a handy reference for disease prevention and management information for the poultry fancier and backyard poultry farmer. The 344-page paperback book is available postpaid for \$21.20. Contact: Storey Communications, P. O. Box 445, Pownal, VT 05261; telephone 1-800-441-5700.

Gift - The 1995 calendar, "365 Ways - Your Daily Guide to Productive Retirement" is unique. Cost is \$13.95. Contact: Resources for Living, P.O. Box 1223, McLean, VA 22101; telephone 1-800-436-5929.

WOW - "World population is growing at 1.6 percent annually. That is equivalent to adding the population of Mexico each year." (*The Baltimore Sun*, July 24, 1994, p. 6A)

Subscription Farming - Proceedings of the December 1993 Davis, California workshop are available for an \$8 check payable to "UC Regents." Contact: David Visser, UC Small Farm Center, University of California, Davis, CA 95616; telephone 916-752-8136.

Christmas Trees - "Growing Christmas Trees: A Guide for Minnesota and the North Central States" is a 28-page bulletin. Send a \$5 check payable to the University of Minnesota to MES Distribution Center, University of Minnesota, 1420 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108-6069; telephone 612-625-8173.

Deadline II-1-94! - The Independent Organic Inspectors Service (IOIS) is now taking applications for the first annual Andrew Rutherford Scholarship Award, which will provide full tuition for one of several IOIS - sponsored 1995 inspection training courses. Contact: Joyce Ford, IOIS, Route 3, Box 162-C, Winona, MN 55987; telephone 507-454-8310.

Dried Vegetable Trade - "International trade in dehydrated vegetables has increased to more than \$1 billion annually and is forecast to expand further. Dehydrated onions, tomatoes, mushrooms and truffles, garlic, carrots, sweet corn, and potatoes are the principal import items." (The Journal of Commerce, May 26, 1994, p.3A)

Tip - To maintain Christmas and holiday plants longer, select a cool spot in your home where the temperature is 65F degrees or less.

Hurry! - Registration closes October 10th for the October 22 - 23, 1994 Marine and Tilapia Culture Seminar at the University of Maryland -Eastern Shore's new Conference Center, Princess Anne, MD. For more information, contact: Tom Handwerker, Small Farm Institute, UMES, Princess Anne, MD 21853; telephone 410-651-6625; Fax 410-651-6207.

Special Gift - Restored vintage tractors from 10 different States and Saskatchewan, Canada are shown in the 1995 "Classic Farm Tractor Calendar" -- the sixth such calendar produced. It can be ordered for \$9.45 from Classic Tractors, P.O. Box 1755, Wilmington, DE 19899.

Tip - Carrots are an excellent storage crop. Store them in your basement this winter in buckets of moistened peat moss.

Features Cotton - "The June 1994 issue of the National Geographic features a 27-page article on cotton around the world. The approach looks at the history of cotton and the impact of the textile industry around the world from the invention in 1771 of the efficient spinning machine in England by Sir Richard Arkwright." (The Cotton Gin and Oil Mill Press, June 11, 1994, p. 9)

Specialty Mushrooms - "Volume of sales for commercially grown specialty mushrooms (Shiitake, Oyster, and all other specialties) in 1992-93 totaled 4.58 million pounds, seven percent above the 1991-92 production. The value increased two percent over last year to \$16.4 million, according to the latest report by the Agriculture Statistics Board." (The Produce News, August 28, 1993, p. 15)

Bird News - Published monthly, the "Dick E. Bird News" costs \$15 a year in the U.S. and \$18 anywhere else in the world. Contact: Richard E. Mallery, 6801 Bunker Hill Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690; telephone 1-800-255-5128.

Information - The "Gardens/Mini-Farms Newsletter" is a 4-page compilation of names, addresses, and sources. Send a SASE with three 29 cent stamps. Contact: Ken Hargesheimer, POB 1901, Lubbock, TX 79408; telephone 806-744-8517.

Gravely Overweight - "One in three American adults is now seriously overweight, the highest number ever reported." (The Washington Post, July 20, 1994, p. 7A)

Living History - This quarterly journal of historical horticulture, material culture, foodways, lifeways, books, and people costs \$15 for a one-year subscription. Contact: Peter A. Sinclair, Living History, P.O. Box 202, West Hurley, NY 12491; telephone 914-338-0257.

Fertilizer and Manure - Knowledge about application equipment is an essential part of profitable and environmentally friendly farming. A 23-page guide, "Fertilizer and Manure Application Equipment" NRAES-57, costs \$6. Contact: Northeast Regional Agricultural Engineering Service, 152 Riley-Robb Hall, Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-5701; telephone 607-255-7654.

FARM-WISE

"One of the greatest compensations of farm life is the closeness of parents and children. Kids grow up working beside their fathers and mothers, learning skills without being aware they are being taught. Pint-sized boys handle big tractors as easily as they ride bicycles. They learn some veterinary skills and a great deal of compassion as they help doctor sick livestock. And they are midget mechanics, running to get a crescent wrench or a half-inch socket, as soon as they can toddle. Just listening to Dad figure out how to mix grass seed, set his drill, or hearing Mom mumbling over her accounts gives them early insight into the world of figures and finance. They may not turn out to be farmers, but somewhere in life, these skills will come back to them when they need them. These kids won't be "street-wise," but being "farm-wise" will serve them better." (Reprinted with permission of Maude C. Reed, Mills, Pennsylvania. Taken from Farm Diary, AgCooperator, May/June 1994 p.33)

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 8 - 9, 1994 - Fall Fiber Festival and Montpelier Sheep Dog Trials at historic Montpelier, Orange County, VA. Contact: Barbara Gentry, Route 7, Box 217, Charlottesville, VA 22901; telephone 804-295-2008.

October 14 - 15, 1994 - AgFest: Fall Vegetable Field Days, Truck Crops Research & Extension Center, Highway 51, Crystal Springs, MS. Contact: Richard G. Snyder, Mississippi County, P.O. Box 231, Crystal Springs, MS 39059; telephone 601-892-3731.

October 17 - 19, 1994 - New England Greenhouse Conference, The Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center, 355 Main Street (Rt. 20), Opposite Old Sturbridge Village, Sturbridge, MA. Contact: Paul Lopes, Glen Charlie Road, East Wareham, MA 02538-0569; telephone 508-295-2212.

November 4-5, 1994 - 2nd Annual Small Farm Today Seminar and Trade Show, Columbia, MO. Contact: Chuck De Courley, 3903 West Ridge Trail Road, Clark, MO 65243; telephone 1-800-633-2535.

November 9-13, 1994 - 6th National Conference Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers, San Jose, CA. Contact: Judy Lushman, ASCFG, 155 Elm Street, Oberlin, OH 44074; telephone 216-774-2887.

November 11 -12, 1994 - 11th Annual National Hydroponic Grower Conference, Delta-Orlando Resort, Orlando, FL. Contact: Jim Brown, P.O. Box 310, Medina, OH 44258; telephone 1-800-321-5656.

November 21-25, 1994 - Systems-Oriented Research in Agriculture and Rural Development, Montpelier, France. Contact: Ms. Anne-Marie Seng-Sourinho, Direction Scientifique, CIRAD-SAR; voice 67617185, Fax 67617186.

December 3, 1994 - Putting Small Acreage to Work: Learn How a Few Acres Can Mean A Big Profit, University of Illinois, State Fair Grounds, Springfield, IL. Contact: Gary Bullen, 480 Deere Road, Macomb, IL; telephone 309-836-3366.

December 11-16, 1994 - 10th International Organic Agriculture, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) Conference, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand. Contact: IFOAM Conference, Centre for Continuing Education, PO Box 84, Lincoln University, Canterbury, New Zealand; telephone (64) (3) 325-2811, Fax (64) (3) 325-2944.

January 7 - 12, 1995 - Pennsylvania Farm Show, Harrisburg, PA. Contact: Victoria C. Ritter, The Farm Show complex, 2301 N. Cameron, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408; telephone 717-787-5373.

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